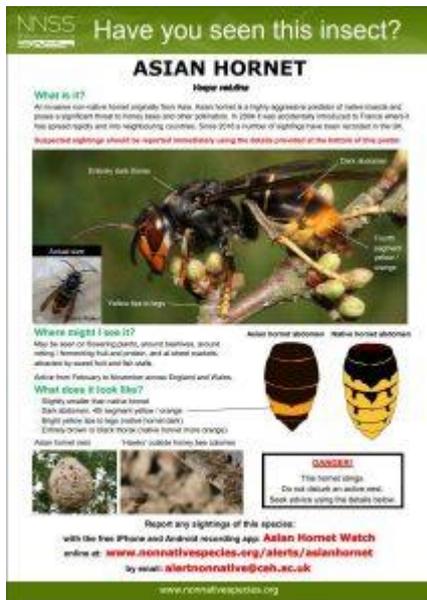


Asian Hornet Week 7th-13th September



We are asking everyone to be vigilant in looking out for this alien species, the Asian Hornet, *Vespa velutina*. This hornet could decimate our pollinators including our honey bees. It is important to have everyone actively looking for it.

The Asian hornet, *vespa velutina*, is an invasive non-native species from Asia. It arrived in France in 2004 where it spread rapidly. It is a highly effective predator of insects, including honey bees and other beneficial species. Consequently, they can cause significant losses to bee colonies, and potentially other native species.

The Asian species is smaller than our native hornet. Adult workers measure from 25mm in length and queens measure 30mm. The abdomen is mostly black except for its fourth abdominal segment which is a yellow band located towards the rear. It has characteristic yellow legs and as a result is

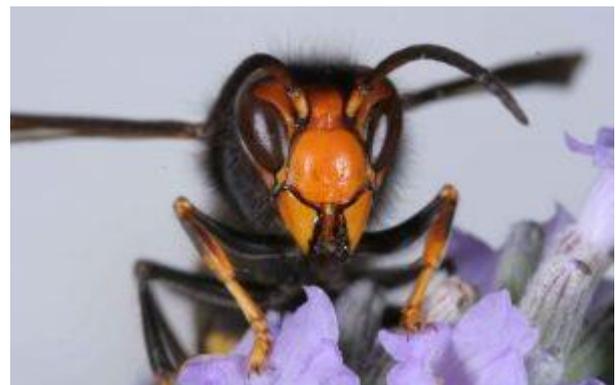
why it is often called the yellow legged hornet. The face is orange with two brownish red compound eyes. Their yearly cycle is as follows:-

Spring

After hibernation in spring, the queen, usually measuring up to 3 cm, will emerge and seek out an appropriate sugary food source in order to build up energy to commence building a small embryonic nest. During construction of the nest, she is alone and vulnerable but she will rapidly begin laying eggs to produce the future workforce. As the colony and nest size increases, a larger nest is either established around the embryonic nest or they relocate and build elsewhere.

Summer

During the summer, a single colony, on average, produces 6000 individuals in one season. From July onwards, Asian hornet predation on honeybee colonies will begin and increase until the end of November and hornets can be seen hovering outside a hive entrance, waiting for returning foragers. This is the characteristic “hawking” behaviour. When they catch a returning bee, they will take it away and feed off of the protein rich thorax; the brood requires animal proteins which are transformed into flesh pellets and then offered to the larvae.



Autumn

During autumn, the nest’s priorities shift from foraging and nest expansion to producing on average 350 potential gynes (queens) and male hornets for mating, however, of these potential queens, only a small amount will successfully mate and make it through winter. After the mating period, the newly fertilised queens will leave the nest and find somewhere suitable to over-winter, while the old



queen will die, leaving the nest to dwindle and die off. The following spring, the founding queen will begin building her new colony and the process begins again.

Late Summer and Autumn is the time for trapping as wasps and hornets lose their sources of floral nectar and find hives full of honey very attractive. The BBKA are asking beekeepers to put an hour aside every day to watch for hornets hawking their hives during Asian Hornet Week.

Above all, it is important to report any suspected sightings of this species as soon as possible. If you do come across an Asian Hornet or suspected please do not touch, kill them or attempt to destroy the nest.

To help distinguish between the many species of Vespa species, the French Museum of Natural History have produced an [AH Identification Information Sheet](#)

Reports should be sent in via the Asian Hornet Watch app or the online recording form using the links below:

- [Asian Hornet Watch app for iPhone](#)
- [Asian Hornet Watch app for android](#)
- [Online recording form for Asian Hornet](#)

You can also report sightings by email: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk. Please include information on location, date and number of Asian hornets you have seen. Please also include a photo if you can, to help our experts identify the insect.



Follow the BBKA on social media and share their posts during Asian hornet week to help reach more people.

<https://twitter.com/britishbee>

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<https://www.instagram.com/britishbeekeepers/>